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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/542,601	03/03/2006	Thomas Franz	2923-720	7285
6449	7590	01/08/2008	EXAMINER	
ROTHWELL, FIGG, ERNST & MANBECK, P.C.			BERMAN, JACK I	
1425 K STREET, N.W.				
SUITE 800			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
WASHINGTON, DC 20005			2881	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			01/08/2008	ELECTRONIC

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

PTO-PAT-Email@rfem.com

TH

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/542,601	FRANZ, THOMAS
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Jack I. Berman	2881

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                            2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
  - 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 18 July 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/3/06.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 6 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 6 and 11-13 provide for the use of silicone and graphite, but, since the claims do not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

Claims 6 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process, i.e., results in a claim which is not a proper process claim under 35 U.S.C. 101. See for example *Ex parte Dunki*, 153 USPQ 678 (Bd.App. 1967) and *Clinical Products, Ltd. v. Brenner*, 255 F. Supp. 131, 149 USPQ 475 (D.D.C. 1966).

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which

it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claim 5 claims that the coating is prepared by polymerizing a “silicone-forming monomer or prepolymer” in the presence of graphite. However, there is no teaching in the specification as to how to form a silicone from a monomer or prepolymer. Instead, line 32 on page 3 of the specification through line 2 on page 4 thereof teaches: “Preferably, monomers or prepolymers, which can react to a silicone, are first mixed with graphite, this mixture is applied to a sample carrier and then polymerized on the sample carrier.” Note that this teaches that the monomers or prepolymers *react* with the silicone, they don’t form it. It is believed that this is what applicant intended to claim, so the claim was examined based on that assumption.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Brock et al. (U. S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0138823). At paragraph [0081], Brock et al. teaches to make a hydrophobic coating on a sample holder for MALDI mass spectrometry of any of several compositions including silicones and graphite and further teaches that these compositions could be used alone or in combination. This would inherently include a mixture of silicone and graphite. The same paragraph also teaches that the composition could be applied to the sample holder as a coating. Brock et al. also teaches a method of analyzing a sample in a mass spectrometer comprising the steps of (a) providing the above mentioned sample holder

containing a coating comprising silicone and graphite, (b) applying the sample onto the sample holder, (b1) washing the sample holder after application of the sample thereto to remove contaminations, including salt contaminations, from the sample (see paragraph [0064]), and (c) performing a mass spectrometry analysis of the sample that includes a laser desorption step (see paragraph [0003]).

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brock et al. At paragraph [0081], Brock et al. teaches that the silicone and graphite coating could be formed as a mono-layer, a thin-film, or a thick-film. This would clearly teach a person having ordinary skill in the art that the thickness of the coating-layer is an obvious matter for routine experimentation. Brock et al. does not teach a specific ratio of graphite to silicone, but “where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955).

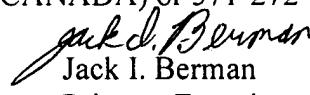
Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brock et al. in view of Offenbacher et al. (U. S. Patent No. 5,928,918). Brock et al. does not teach how to prepare the silicone-graphite coating taught for use on the sample holder of a mass spectrometer. Offenbacher et al. teaches, however, that a coating for holding samples can be prepared by polymerizing a prepolymer with a silicone (see line 29 in column 5 through line 2 in column 6)

in the presence of graphite (see line 6 in column 7) is useful for holding a biological material for analysis. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art to use the known material described by Offenbacher et al. as the silicone and graphite coating described in general terms by Brock et al. since the stated purpose of this coating is to hold a sample, especially a biological sample, for analysis.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jack I. Berman whose telephone number is (571) 272-2468. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (8:30-7:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert H. Kim can be reached on (571) 272-2293. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
Jack I. Berman  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2881

jb  
1/2/08